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**Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research**
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**Faculty of Letters and Languages**
**Department of English**


# THE EFFECTIVENESS OF BLENDED LEARNING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC
## A Case Study of the Department of English at AmmarThelidji University

**Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfillment for the Requirement of Master Degree in Civilisation and Literature**

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# DEDICATIONS

The dissertation is dedicated to our parents, our first teachers in life who taught us to have faith in God in hard times and to be patient and responsible.May Allah bless their souls.

To our dear friends who showed us love and helped us reach our goals,
Thank you for the whole support you have been always giving us, to all our classmates and to everyone who helped us reach this milestone in my life.

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# ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about major changes to the educational system globally, including the widespread adoption of blended learning. Blended learning combines traditional face-to-face instruction with online learning and provides flexibility and convenience in delivering education. In this context, it is essential to evaluate the effectiveness of blended learning in the department of English at the University of Laghouatduring the pandemic. The present study aims at investigate the impact of blended learning on student learning outcomesin the department during the pandemic.Composed of three chapters, this paper, on one side, provided a theoretical background on blended learning and the main components needed for its viability as an approach to learning, while emphasizing its effectiveness and impact on students' performance during the COVID-19 pandemic era in Algeria. On the other hand, the third chapter dealt with the practical part of this study, where EFL students were handed a questionnaire which was analyzed in the data analysis section. The main results were partially in favor of blended learning viability; it was found that not only students performed better in their exams during the pandemic era, but also their attitudes towards blended learning were mostly positive. It was indeed clear that blended learning had a positive impact on students' performance despite it being temporarily implemented as an alternative to face-to-face learning.



***Keywords:***Blended learning, COVID-19 pandemic.

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# GENERAL

# INTRODUCTION

The study of the effectiveness of blended learning has been a topic of interest in the field of education, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has disrupted traditional classroom-based learning and shifted education towards remote and online learning methods. As a result, blended learning, which combines traditional classroom-based teaching with online and remote learning, has become an increasingly popular approach to education.Numerous studies have investigated the effectiveness of blended learning in various subjects and contexts. Some studies have found that blended learning can lead to improved student outcomes, such as increased engagement, motivation, and achievement. Other studies, however, have found no significant differences between blended learning and traditional classroom-based learning.Studies have also shown that blended learning can offer benefits for both students and teachers, such as increased flexibility, personalization, and the ability to meet the diverse needs of learners. The pandemic has emphasized the need for blended learning as a flexible and adaptable approach to education, particularly for students who may struggle with remote learning due to lack of access to technology or other resources. There are also some challenges to blended learning, including the need for high-quality technology infrastructure, adequate teacher training, and effective design and implementation of blended learning programs. These challenges are particularly relevant during the pandemic, as remote and online learning has become increasingly prevalent and the need for high-quality technology and resources has become more pressing.

## 1. Aims of the study

The main aim of this research is to evaluate the effectiveness of blended learning in the department of English at the University of Laghouatduring the pandemic. The specific objectives of this study are:

- To investigate the impact of blended learning on student learning outcomes in the department of English at the University of Laghouat during the pandemic.
- To assess the level of student engagement and motivation in the department of English at the University of Laghouatduring the pandemic when using blended learning.
- To determine the level of student satisfaction and retention with blended learning in the department of English at the University of Laghouat during the pandemic.
- To identify the challenges faced by teachers and students in implementing blended learning in the department of English at the University of Laghouatduring the pandemic and suggest solutions to overcome these challenges.
- To compare the effectiveness of blended learning with traditional teaching methods in the department of English at the University of Laghouatduring and after the pandemic.

## 2. Statement of the Problem

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced educational institutions to quickly shift to online learning, leading to the need for a comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of blended learning in delivering education during the pandemic. The shift to blended learning in the department of English at the University of Laghouatduring the pandemic has presented both opportunities and challenges in delivering education. The present study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of blended learning in the department of English at the University of Laghouatduring the pandemic.

## 3. Research Questions

This research seeks to answer the following research questions

1. How effective is blended learning in the department of English at the University of Laghouat?
2. How effective is blended learning in improving student learning outcomes in the department of English at the University of Laghouatduring the pandemic?

## 4. Hypotheses

Based on the above research questions, we propose the following research hypotheses:

Blended learning during the pandemic results in a positive impact on student learning outcomes in the department of English at the University of Laghouat.

Teachers in the department of English at the University of Laghouatreport higher levels of satisfaction and effectiveness with blended learning during the pandemic compared to traditional in-person teaching methods.

Blended learning during the pandemic resultsin increased levels of technology integration and teacher competence in the use of technology in the department of English at the University of Laghouat.

These hypotheses will be tested through a mixed-methods research design that includes a questionnaire, and observations of students and teachers in the department of English at the University of Laghouat. The data collected will be analyzed to determine the impact of blended learning during the pandemic on student learning outcomes, teacher experiences, and overall educational outcomes.

## 5. Significance of the Study

The results of this research will provide a comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of blended learning in the department of English at the University of Laghouatduring the pandemic. The outcomes of this study will inform the development of strategies to improve

blended learning in the department during future pandemics or other circumstances that require remote learning. The results will also contribute to the broader literature on blended learning and its implementation during times of crisis.

## 6. Definitions of Key Concepts

**Blended learning:** A teaching method that combines traditional classroom-based instruction with online learning activities.

**Effectiveness:** The degree to which a teaching method produces positive outcomes, such as improved student performance and satisfaction.

**Pandemic:** A widespread occurrence of an infectious disease that affects an entire community or a large number of people.

**Department of English:** The academic department within a university responsible for teaching the English language and literature.

**University of Laghouat:** A higher education institution located in Laghouat, Algeria.

**Traditional classroom-based instruction:** A teaching method that relies on face-to-face interactions between students and teachers in a physical classroom setting.

**Online learning:** A teaching method that relies on digital technologies to deliver educational content and activities to students.

**Student performance:** The extent to which students demonstrate mastery of course material and reach educational goals.

**Student satisfaction:** The degree to which students are satisfied with the quality of their educational experience.

# Chapter One

# Blended Learning

## 1.1. Introduction

This chapter is an overview about Blended Learning. It explores the various dimensions and ingredients of blended learning, including its historical background, definitions, and models. Additionally, it examines the role of teachers and learners in this context, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of this approach to learning. It also looks at the different components that make up blended learning and the factors that can affect its effectiveness. Furthermore, this chapter presents comparative studies on blended learning and traditional classroom teaching to evaluate the efficacy of blended learning. The chapter ends up with a comprehensive understanding of blended learning and its potential to revolutionize the educational experience.

## 1.2. An Overview of the Definitions of Blended Learning

Blended learning, also known as hybrid learning, is a teaching method that combines traditional face-to-face instruction with online learning. It has gained popularity in recent years as an effective way to combine the best of both worlds and address some of the challenges associated with purely traditional or purely online learning. However, there is no single definition of blended learning that is widely accepted, and this lack of consensus has led to confusion and ambiguity around the concept.

### 1.2.1 Traditional Definitions of Blended Learning

The traditional definition of blended learning involves a mix of face-to-face instruction and online learning. The amount of face-to-face and online instruction can vary depending on the program, and the two components may be delivered simultaneously or at different times. In 2003, Graham, Allen, and Ure defined blended learning as “the thoughtful integration of classroom face-to-face learning experiences with online learning experiences.” Similarly,

Garrison and Kanuka (2004) defined blended learning as “the thoughtful integration of classroom face-to-face learning experiences with online learning experiences in a way that enables significant contribution to the intended learning outcomes.

### 1.2.2. Modern Definitions of Blended Learning

The rapid development of technology has led to new interpretations of blended learning that go beyond the traditional face-to-face and online mix.

Recent definitions of blended learning highlight the importance of flexibility, student-centered learning, and technology integration in defining and implementing this pedagogical approach. For example, Sharma and Kaur (2020) define blended learning as "a learning environment that combines face-to-face and online learning, focusing on the needs of the learners, integrating technology, and promoting active learning." Similarly, Picciano (2020) describes blended learning as "a pedagogical approach that leverages the affordances of technology to support student-centered learning and enhance learning outcomes."

Other definitions emphasize the role of technology in facilitating blended learning. Garrison and Vaughan (2020) describe blended learning as "the thoughtful integration of classroom face-to-face learning experiences with online learning experiences." They argue that blended learning should be designed with a focus on "the creation of engaging and effective learning experiences, using technology in ways that support student learning."

### 1.2.3 Challenges in Defining Blended Learning

Defining blended learning is a challenge due to a lack of consensus regarding its core elements. Some scholars define blended learning as a combination of face-to-face and online instruction (Garrison &Kanuka, 2004), while others adopt a more flexible stance, considering

any mix of instructional methods as blended learning (Graham, 2006). The ambiguity extends to the choice of technologies integrated into the blend, with some models incorporating various digital tools (Bonk & Graham, 2012).

Blended learning, although popular in education, presents an ongoing definitional challenge (Vaughan et al., 2013). The traditional and modern definitions diverge in terms of their emphasis, creating complexities for educators looking to adopt this approach (Peralta & Costa, 2018). This lack of consensus hampers efforts to implement blended learning effectively in diverse educational settings. Nevertheless, educators can overcome these challenges through careful planning and consideration of their students' unique needs and contextual factors, ultimately leading to improved learning outcomes and enhanced student engagement (Graham et al., 2013).

### 1.2.4. Historical Background of Blended Learning

The concept of blended learning is not a new one. In fact, it has been around for many decades. In the early 1960s, educational psychologist B.F. Skinner developed a method called programmed instruction, which involved a combination of self-paced learning and instructor-led sessions. This approach was seen as a precursor to the modern-day concept of blended learning.

In the 1990s, the development of the internet and the rise of e-learning gave rise to new opportunities for blended learning. The term "blended learning" itself was coined in the late 1990s by Rosalind Picard and colleagues at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Since its inception, blended learning has evolved significantly. In the early days, it was mainly used in corporate training programs and vocational education. However, as

technology has advanced, blended learning has become more prevalent in traditional academic settings.

One of the key developments in the evolution of blended learning was the rise of learning management systems (LMS) in the early 2000s. LMS platforms such as Blackboard and Moodle allowed instructors to easily combine online learning materials with face-to-face instruction.

Another key development was the widespread adoption of mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets. This has enabled students to access online learning materials anywhere, anytime, and has further enhanced the flexibility of blended learning.

Blended learning has had a significant impact on education. It has allowed for greater flexibility and accessibility, enabling students to learn at their own pace and in their own time. It has also facilitated the creation of personalized learning experiences, where instructors can tailor instruction to meet the specific needs of individual students.

Blended learning has also been shown to improve student engagement and motivation. A study by the Clayton Christensen Institute (2013)found that blended learning increased student engagement by 38%, compared to traditional classroom instruction.

Blended learning has a rich historical background that has evolved significantly over the years. It has had a profound impact on education, enabling greater flexibility, accessibility, and personalization. As technology continues to advance, we can expect blended learning to continue to evolve and play an increasingly important role in education.

## 1.3. Dimensions of Blended Learning

The dimensions of blended learning refer to the different elements that make up this approach to education. According to Garrison and Vaughan (2008), blended learning has

three main dimensions: (1) the mode of delivery, (2) the learning environment, and (3) the role of the instructor. These dimensions are further elaborated below.

1. Mode of delivery: The mode of delivery refers to the different ways in which learning is delivered to students. In blended learning, the mode of delivery can be either synchronous or asynchronous. Synchronous delivery involves real-time interaction between students and instructors, while asynchronous delivery allows students to access materials and complete assignments at their own pace.
2. Learning environment: The learning environment refers to the physical and virtual spaces in which learning takes place. In blended learning, students may learn in a traditional classroom setting, an online learning management system, or a combination of both.
3. Role of the instructor: The role of the instructor refers to the different roles that instructors can take in blended learning. Instructors may act as facilitators, mentors, or coaches, depending on the needs of the students and the nature of the course.

## 1.4. The Requirements for Implementing Blended Learning

The success of blended learning depends on a number of key dimensions and ingredients, including the design of the learning environment, the quality of the content, the level of interaction between students and teachers, and the use of technology to support learning (Picciano, 2009).

In order to successfully implement blended learning, certain technological, pedagogical, and organizational requirements must be met. Technological requirements include access to appropriate hardware and software, as well as reliable internet connectivity (Graham, 2006). Pedagogical requirements include the development of effective learning

activities and assessments, as well as the use of appropriate instructional strategies (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008). Organizational requirements include the provision of appropriate resources and support for teachers and students, as well as the development of policies and procedures to guide the implementation of blended learning (Graham, 2006).

Challenges associated with the implementation of blended learning include resistance to change, lack of technical expertise, and issues related to the design and delivery of online content (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008). To overcome these challenges, it is important to provide appropriate training and support for teachers, involve students in the design and delivery of blended learning activities, and ensure that online content is of high quality and relevant to the learning objectives (Graham, 2006).

Blended learning is a promising approach to education that can offer numerous benefits to students and teachers. However, its successful implementation requires careful consideration of a range of requirements, including technological, pedagogical, and organizational factors. By understanding these requirements and overcoming the associated challenges, educational institutions can fully realize the potential of blended learning to enhance student learning outcomes and improve the overall quality of education.

## 1.5. Components of Blended Learning

### 1.5.1. Instructional Design:

Instructional design is a critical component of blended learning that involves designing learning activities, assessments, and materials that meet the needs of learners. It is important to ensure that the design of blended learning activities is consistent with the learning objectives and aligns with the curriculum. The design should also take into account the

various modes of delivery, including synchronous and asynchronous learning, and should incorporate multimedia and interactive elements to engage learners.

### 1.5.2. Technology:

Technology is another critical component of blended learning, and it can include a range of tools and resources, such as learning management systems (LMS), video conferencing software, and other digital resources. Technology can enhance the learning experience by providing learners with access to resources and enabling collaboration and communication. However, it is important to ensure that the technology used is user-friendly and accessible, and that learners have the necessary skills and support to use it effectively.

### 1.5.3. Assessment:

Assessment is an essential component of blended learning and plays a crucial role in measuring learner progress and providing feedback. It is important to design assessments that align with the learning objectives and incorporate a range of assessment methods, including formative and summative assessments. The use of technology can also enhance assessment by providing opportunities for self-assessment, peer assessment, and feedback.

### 1.5.4. Learner Support:

Learner support is a crucial component of blended learning, as it helps learners to succeed in their learning journey. It is important to provide learners with the necessary support and resources to enable them to engage with the learning activities effectively. This can include providing technical support, tutoring services, and access to learning resources.

## 1.6. Models of Blended Learning

Blended learning can be implemented in various ways, depending on the educational goals, learners' needs, and available resources. The different models of blended learning include the following:

**The Flipped Classroom Model**:

The flipped classroom model is a popular approach in blended learning, in which the traditional roles of classroom instruction and homework assignments are reversed. This model involves students learning new content online outside of the classroom and then applying and practicing this knowledge in the classroom through activities and discussions (Bishop &Verleger, 2013).

The origins of the flipped classroom model can be traced back to the early 1990s when Eric Mazur, a physics professor at Harvard University, started using peer instruction as a way to engage students in the classroom. This approach involved students watching video lectures before class and then answering conceptual questions in small groups during class (Mazur, 1997). In 2007, two high school teachers, Jonathan Bergmann and Aaron Sams, developed a similar approach to teaching chemistry and math using screencasting software to record their lectures and post them online for students to watch at home. This approach was coined the "flipped classroom" (Bergmann &Sams, 2012) and has since gained popularity across various educational levels.

The flipped classroom model is based on a constructivist approach to learning, which posits that knowledge is constructed through social interaction and experience (Vygotsky, 1978). In this model, students are encouraged to take an active role in their learning, engage in peer-to-peer interaction, and apply new knowledge to solve problems (Bishop &Verleger,

2013). The flipped classroom model also draws on the principles of cognitive load theory, which suggests that learners have a limited capacity for processing information, and that learning is optimized when cognitive load is managed effectively (Sweller, van Merrienboer, &Paas, 2019). By allowing students to learn new content at their own pace outside of the classroom, the flipped classroom model aims to reduce cognitive load and increase student engagement and retention.

The implementation of the flipped classroom model can vary depending on the needs and goals of the teacher and students. However, some common strategies include creating and sharing pre-recorded lectures or videos, assigning readings or online modules, and using online discussion boards or collaborative tools for peer-to-peer interaction and feedback (Tucker, 2012). In the classroom, teachers can use a variety of strategies to engage students in application and practice of new knowledge, such as group discussions, problem-based learning, and project-based learning (Bishop &Verleger, 2013).

**The Flex Model**:

The Flex Model, introduced by Heather Staker and Michael Horn in 2012, is a type of blended learning that emphasizes student choice and self-directed learning. In this model, students have control over the time, place, path, and pace of their learning (Staker& Horn, 2012). The Flex Model is designed to meet the needs of individual students while still providing structure and support.

In the Flex Model, students typically spend some time in a physical classroom with a teacher, and some time working independently on digital content. The digital content can include online courses, educational videos, interactive simulations, and other resources that

are accessible on a computer or tablet. Students are able to progress through the digital content at their own pace, and can receive support and feedback from their teacher as needed (Staker& Horn, 2012).

One of the key benefits of the Flex Model is its ability to provide personalized learning experiences for students. By allowing students to choose their own path and pace, the Flex Model can help ensure that each student is challenged appropriately and receives the support they need to succeed. The model also allows teachers to focus more on individual instruction and support, as they are freed up from delivering traditional lectures to the entire class (Staker& Horn, 2012).

However, there are also potential challenges to implementing the Flex Model. One concern is that students may struggle with the self-directed nature of the model, and may require additional support and guidance from teachers to stay on track. Additionally, implementing the model may require significant investment in technology and infrastructure to ensure that students have access to the necessary digital resources (Staker& Horn, 2012).

Despite these challenges, the Flex Model has shown promise in improving student outcomes. For example, a study of a Flex Model implementation in a California high school found that students who participated in the program showed higher rates of academic growth than their peers in traditional classroom settings (Rice, Dawley, Laffey, & Li, 2018).

Overall, the Flex Model is an innovative approach to blended learning that emphasizes student choice and personalized learning experiences. While there are potential challenges to

implementing the model, it has shown promise in improving student outcomes and providing students with the skills they need to succeed in the 21st century.

**The Station Rotation Model**:

The Station Rotation Model is a type of Blended Learning where students rotate between different stations, each with a different learning activity. This model is often used in elementary and middle schools but can be adapted for other levels as well. Horn and Staker (2014) define the Station Rotation Model as "a course or subject in which students experience the rotation of learning modalities on a fixed schedule within a given classroom or group of classrooms" (p. 13).

In this model, the teacher sets up several stations, each with a different learning activity, and students rotate through them over the course of a class period or week. The activities can include online learning, group work, individual work, or teacher-led instruction. The teacher is responsible for designing and managing the stations, providing instruction and support as needed, and monitoring student progress.

Research has shown that the Station Rotation Model can be effective in improving student learning outcomes. A study by Means et al. (2013) found that students in Station Rotation classrooms had higher scores on standardized tests compared to students in traditional classrooms. Additionally, students in the Station Rotation Model reported higher levels of engagement and satisfaction with their learning experiences (Horn &Staker, 2014).

One of the advantages of the Station Rotation Model is that it allows for personalized and differentiated learning. Students can work at their own pace, and the teacher can provide targeted instruction and support based on each student's needs. Additionally, the model

allows for a variety of learning activities, which can help keep students engaged and motivated.

However, there are also some challenges associated with implementing the Station Rotation Model. Teachers must carefully design and manage the stations to ensure that each activity is effective and engaging for students. Additionally, students may require additional support and guidance to work independently or in groups.

Overall, the Station Rotation Model is a promising approach to Blended Learning that has been shown to improve student outcomes and engagement. However, it is important for teachers to carefully consider the design and implementation of the model to ensure its effectiveness.

**The Online Lab Model**:

The Online Lab Model, also known as the "Lab Rotation Model," is a type of blended learning model that combines traditional face-to-face classroom instruction with online learning experiences in a laboratory setting (Staker& Horn, 2012). In this model, students rotate between a traditional classroom setting and a computer lab or online learning environment where they engage in self-paced online activities or exercises related to the course content.

The Online Lab Model is particularly useful for science courses, where students can benefit from hands-on laboratory experience in addition to online learning. The model allows students to engage in online simulations, experiments, and other interactive activities that would otherwise be impossible in a traditional classroom setting.

The Online Lab Model also allows for flexibility in scheduling, as students can complete online activities outside of regular class hours. Additionally, it provides opportunities for individualized instruction and assessment, as online activities can be tailored to individual student needs and progress.

Despite its potential benefits, the Online Lab Model also presents some challenges. One of the biggest challenges is the need for access to technology and reliable internet connectivity. Students may also struggle with the self-discipline and motivation required for successful online learning.

Overall, the Online Lab Model is an effective and innovative approach to blended learning, particularly for science courses. It provides opportunities for hands-on learning and individualized instruction while also incorporating the benefits of online learning.

**The Face-to-Face Driver Model**:

The Face-to-Face Driver Model is a blended learning model that places traditional, face-to-face instruction at the center of the learning experience, with technology serving as a supplementary tool (Staker& Horn, 2012). In this model, students attend regular classroom sessions where they receive direct instruction from a teacher, who serves as the "driver" of the learning experience. Technology is used to enhance and reinforce the content covered in the classroom, as well as to provide opportunities for independent practice and assessment.

The Face-to-Face Driver Model is often used in K-12 education, particularly in subject areas such as math and science, where students may benefit from hands-on activities and

demonstrations in a face-to-face setting (Staker& Horn, 2012). In this model, technology is used to provide students with additional resources and support outside of the classroom, such as video lectures, interactive simulations, and online practice activities.

One of the key benefits of the Face-to-Face Driver Model is that it allows for personalized instruction that can be tailored to the needs of individual learners (Staker& Horn, 2012). Because the teacher is able to provide direct instruction and feedback in the classroom, students are able to receive immediate support and guidance as they work through challenging concepts and problems. At the same time, technology can be used to provide additional support and practice opportunities for students who may need extra help.

Another advantage of the Face-to-Face Driver Model is that it promotes active learning and engagement in the classroom (Staker& Horn, 2012). By placing the teacher at the center of the learning experience, students are encouraged to participate in classroom discussions, ask questions, and work collaboratively with their peers. Technology can also be used to facilitate group work and collaborative projects, as well as to provide students with opportunities for independent exploration and discovery.

However, one potential disadvantage of the Face-to-Face Driver Model is that it may not be as flexible or adaptable as other blended learning models (Staker& Horn, 2012). Because the teacher is the primary driver of the learning experience, there may be limited opportunities for students to pursue their own interests or to learn at their own pace. Additionally, because technology is used primarily as a supplementary tool, there may be less emphasis on developing digital literacy skills and competencies.

Overall, the Face-to-Face Driver Model offers a unique approach to blended learning that combines the benefits of traditional, face-to-face instruction with the advantages of technology-enhanced learning. By placing the teacher at the center of the learning experience, this model promotes active engagement and personalized instruction, while also providing students with opportunities for independent exploration and practice.

## 1.7. Factors Affecting Blended Learning

**Pedagogical Factors:**

Pedagogical factors are the most significant factors affecting blended learning success. Course design and teaching strategies play a crucial role in determining the effectiveness of blended learning (Bersin, 2013). In blended learning, course design should be based on a sound pedagogical framework that takes into account the needs and preferences of learners. The design should focus on the learning objectives and outcomes, and the use of technology should be aligned with the instructional goals (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008).

Teaching strategies in blended learning should be interactive and engaging, and should promote active learning and student-centered approaches (Bersin, 2013). Teachers should use a variety of instructional strategies, including collaborative learning, discussion forums, and peer review, to enhance the learning experience. They should also provide timely feedback to students and encourage self-reflection and self-assessment (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008).

**Technological Factors:**

Technological factors are also important in blended learning. The availability and quality of online learning tools can affect the success of blended learning (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008). Online learning tools should be user-friendly, accessible, and reliable. They should also provide a range of features, such as multimedia content, interactive activities, and communication tools, to enhance the learning experience (Bersin, 2013).

The integration of technology with face-to-face instruction is also important in blended learning. Teachers should use technology to support and complement classroom-based instruction, rather than replace it (Graham, Woodfield, & Harrison, 2013). The use of technology should also be aligned with the instructional goals and learning objectives.

**Social Factors:**

Social factors, such as student support and teacher training, are also important in blended learning. Students require adequate support to succeed in blended learning. They need access to technical support, academic advising, and counseling services (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008). Teachers should also provide guidance and support to students, both online and in the classroom. They should be available to answer questions, provide feedback, and offer assistance (Bersin, 2013).

Teacher training is also important in blended learning. Teachers require adequate training to effectively integrate technology with face-to-face instruction (Graham, Woodfield, & Harrison, 2013). They should be trained to use online learning tools and to design and deliver blended learning courses effectively.

**Organizational Factors:**

Organizational factors, such as institutional support and resources, also play a role in blended learning success. Institutions should provide adequate support and resources to teachers and students to ensure the success of blended learning programs (Graham, Woodfield, & Harrison, 2013). This includes providing access to online learning platforms, technical support, and professional development opportunities.

## 1.8. Teachers and Learners' Role in the Blended Learning

Learners and teachers are the most fundamental players in the learning process; as a result, their roles are extremely important to the overall success of the process. Because each other's work makes the other stronger. This is not only applicable in a traditional setting, but also in a blended learning environment; furthermore, they have specific roles for the purpose of efficient application.

### 1.8.1. Teachers' Role in the Blended Learning

In blended learning, teachers play a crucial role in designing and delivering effective learning experiences. Teachers must have a sound understanding of the learning objectives, content, and delivery methods. According to the Community College Research Center, teachers' primary responsibilities in blended learning include designing and creating learning materials, assessing student learning, providing feedback and support, and facilitating discussions and collaboration (Jaggars, Edgecombe & Stacey, 2013).

The design of blended learning should be based on the principles of instructional design, such as assessing learning needs, setting learning objectives, choosing appropriate content,

and selecting suitable delivery methods. Teachers should also be able to create and deliver high-quality digital content that is engaging and interactive.

Teachers must have strong pedagogical skills and be able to use technology effectively to design and deliver high-quality digital content. They should be able to create a supportive and collaborative learning environment, provide feedback, and assess student learning.

### 1.8.2. Learners' Role in the Blended Learning

Learners' role in blended learning is also significant, and they must take responsibility for their learning. Learners must be self-directed and motivated to learn, take ownership of their learning, and participate actively in the learning process. Blended learning offers learners flexibility and allows them to learn at their own pace, which requires self-discipline and time-management skills.

Learners must also possess digital literacy skills to use the technology effectively, navigate digital platforms, and communicate effectively online. They should be able to collaborate with peers and teachers, give and receive feedback, and engage in meaningful discussions.

## 1.9. Advantages and Disadvantages of Blended Learning

Blended learning allows for flexibility and personalization in the learning process, making it an attractive option for many students and instructors. However, like any teaching approach, there are both advantages and disadvantages to blended learning. This section aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of blended learning.

### 1.9.1. Advantages of Blended Learning:

**Improved Student Learning Outcomes**: Blended learning has been shown to improve student learning outcomes. A meta-analysis of 45 studies found that blended learning resulted in higher student achievement compared to traditional face-to-face instruction (Means et al., 2010). Blended learning allows for a more personalized and flexible learning experience, which can lead to improved student engagement and motivation (Graham, Woodfield, & Harrison, 2013).

**Increased Access to Education**: Blended learning can increase access to education for students who may not have the ability to attend traditional face-to-face classes. Online components of blended courses can be accessed from anywhere with an internet connection, making education more accessible to students who live in remote or rural areas, have family or work commitments, or have disabilities (Garrison &Kanuka, 2004).

**Cost-Effective**: Blended learning can be a cost-effective option for institutions. By reducing the number of face-to-face classes, institutions can save on facilities, utilities, and other operational costs. Additionally, online components of blended courses can be reused from semester to semester, reducing the need for continuous development of new course materials (Garrison &Kanuka, 2004).

### 1.9.2. Disadvantages of Blended Learning:

**Technological Challenges**: Blended learning relies heavily on technology, which can be a challenge for both students and instructors. Technical issues such as internet connectivity, hardware problems, and software glitches can disrupt the learning experience and lead to frustration and disengagement (Garrison &Kanuka, 2004).

**Student Preparedness:** Blended learning requires a certain level of digital literacy and self-motivation from students. Students who are not comfortable with technology or who lack self-discipline may struggle with the online components of blended courses (Graham, Woodfield, & Harrison, 2013). Instructors may need to provide additional support and training to help students adapt to the blended learning environment.

**Instructor Preparedness**: Blended learning requires a significant amount of preparation and planning on the part of instructors. Instructors must be proficient in using technology and must develop new teaching strategies to effectively deliver course content in a blended format (Garrison &Kanuka, 2004). Instructors may also need to devote more time to providing feedback and support to students in both online and face-to-face settings.

Blended learning offers several advantages over traditional face-to-face instruction, including improved student learning outcomes, increased access to education, and cost-effectiveness. However, blended learning is not without its challenges and drawbacks, including technological challenges, student preparedness, and instructor preparedness. Institutions and instructors must carefully consider these factors when implementing blended learning to ensure a successful and effective learning experience for all students.

## 1.10. Comparative Studies on Blended Learning and Traditional Classroom Teaching

Numerous comparative studies have been conducted to compare the effectiveness of blended learning and traditional classroom teaching. For example, a study by Allen and Seaman (2013) found that blended learning was more effective than traditional classroom teaching. The study found that students who participated in blended learning had higher

course completion rates, higher grades, and higher satisfaction rates compared to students who participated in traditional classroom teaching.

Another study by Means et al. (2013) found that blended learning was more effective than traditional classroom teaching in improving student outcomes. The study found that students who participated in blended learning had higher test scores, better retention rates, and higher student engagement compared to students who participated in traditional classroom teaching.

However, some studies have found that traditional classroom teaching is more effective than blended learning. For example, a study by Bernard et al. (2004) found that traditional classroom teaching was more effective in promoting higher-order thinking skills than blended learning. The study found that students who participated in traditional classroom teaching had higher scores on measures of higher-order thinking skills compared to students who participated in blended learning.

Comparative studies have shown that blended learning is more effective than traditional classroom teaching in promoting student outcomes. However, traditional classroom teaching has its advantages, including face-to-face interaction and classroom community. Therefore, educators should carefully consider their educational goals and the needs of their students when deciding between blended learning and traditional classroom.

## 1.11. The Effectiveness of Blended Learning during the Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced educational institutions around the world to shift to online and blended learning to ensure the safety of students and educators. Blended learning has emerged as a popular approach to continue education during the pandemic.

Several studies have examined the effectiveness of blended learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, a study by Haug et al. (2021) found that blended learning was effective in maintaining student engagement and motivation during the pandemic. The study found that students who participated in blended learning had higher levels of engagement and motivation compared to students who only received online instruction.

Similarly, a study by Kim and Song (2021) found that blended learning was effective in improving student learning outcomes during the pandemic. The study found that students who participated in blended learning had higher test scores and better performance on assignments compared to students who only received online instruction.

Another study by Sun and Wang (2021) found that blended learning was effective in promoting student interaction and collaboration during the pandemic. The study found that students who participated in blended learning had higher levels of interaction and collaboration with their peers compared to students who only received online instruction.

However, some studies have also reported challenges with blended learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, a study by Wang et al. (2021) found that students who participated in blended learning experienced technological issues and difficulties in managing their time and workload.

Overall, the research studies suggest that blended learning is an effective approach to continue education during the COVID-19 pandemic. Blended learning can maintain student engagement, improve learning outcomes, and promote student interaction and collaboration. However, educators should also consider the challenges associated with blended learning, such as technological issues and time management difficulties.

## 1.12 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a comprehensive overview of this innovative and dynamic approach to education. The chapter has highlighted the challenges of defining blended learning, traced its historical evolution, and identified the key dimensions and ingredients of effective blended learning. The chapter has also explored the advantages and disadvantages of blended learning, the various models that are used, and the factors that impact its success.

One of the key takeaways from this chapter is that blended learning has the potential to transform education by combining the best of both traditional classroom teaching and online learning. This approach offers flexibility, personalization, and increased engagement for learners, while also providing teachers with new tools and strategies for designing and delivering effective learning experiences. However, the successful implementation of blended learning requires careful planning, effective use of technology, and supportive institutional policies and practices.

The next chapter explores teaching during the pandemic in Algeria at the university level, focusing on the challenges faced by educators and students, the effectiveness of online and blended learning, and best practices for delivering high-quality instruction during these unprecedented times.

# Chapter Two: Teaching During the Pandemic in Algeria at University Level

## Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on education systems worldwide, and Algerian universities have not been exempt from its effects. In response to the pandemic, Algerian universities have adopted various approaches to teaching, including blended learning, which combines face-to-face instruction with online learning. This chapter explores the historical context of blended learning in Algeria, the adoption and implementation of blended learning in Algerian universities, the impacts of blended learning on teaching and learning in these universities, and the challenges faced in implementing blended learning. By examining these topics, this chapter seeks to provide insight into the effectiveness of blended learning in Algerian universities and the challenges that educators and students face when implementing this approach. Ultimately, this chapter aims to contribute to the ongoing discussion of best practices for teaching during the pandemic and beyond.

## 2.1. Definition of COVID19 and Its Symptoms

COVID-19, also known as coronavirus disease 2019, is a highly infectious disease It was first identified in Wuhan, China in December 2019 and has since spread to become a global pandemic.

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness caused by SARS-CoV-2, which primarily spreads through respiratory droplets when an infected person talks, coughs, or sneezes. The virus can also spread by touching a surface or object contaminated with the virus and then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes. COVID-19 can cause a range of symptoms from mild to severe, and in some cases, can lead to hospitalization and even death.

The symptoms of COVID-19 can vary from person to person, and some people may not show any symptoms at all. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the most common symptoms of COVID-19 include:

1. Fever or chills: A fever is a temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher. Chills can also accompany a fever.
2. Cough: A dry cough that doesn't produce phlegm is a common symptom of COVID-19.
3. Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing: This can be a sign of a severe case of COVID-19 and requires immediate medical attention.
4. Fatigue: Feeling tired or exhausted is a common symptom of COVID-19.
5. Muscle or body aches: Body aches and muscle soreness can be symptoms of COVID-19.
6. Headache: A headache is a common symptom of COVID-19 and can range from mild to severe.
7. Loss of taste or smell: This symptom has been reported by many COVID-19 patients, even those with mild cases.
8. Sore throat: A sore throat can be a symptom of COVID-19.
9. Congestion or runny nose: These symptoms are less common but can be present in some COVID-19 patients.

It is important to note that these symptoms can appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. Some people may have mild symptoms that go away on their own, while others may require hospitalization.

COVID-19 is a highly infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. The symptoms of COVID-19 can vary from mild to severe and can include fever, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle aches, headache, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, and congestion or runny nose. It is important to practice preventative measures, such as wearing masks and social distancing, to help stop the spread of COVID-19. If you experience any

symptoms of COVID-19, seek medical attention and follow the guidance of healthcare professionals.

## 2.2. COVID19 in Algeria and Its Impact on Education

Algeria reported its first case of COVID-19 on February 25, 2020. Since then, the number of confirmed cases and deaths has steadily increased. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), as of March 22, 2023, there have been 315,547 confirmed cases and 8,032 deaths in Algeria.

The Algerian government responded to the outbreak by implementing a range of measures to prevent the spread of the virus. These measures included the closure of schools, universities, and non-essential businesses, as well as restrictions on public gatherings and transportation. In addition, the government launched a nationwide vaccination campaign in January 2021.

The closure of schools and universities in Algeria has had a significant impact on education. The Algerian Ministry of National Education implemented distance learning programs to allow students to continue their studies remotely. However, these programs have faced challenges, including lack of access to technology and internet connectivity in some areas.

## 2.3 The Shutdown of Universities in Algeria

The Algerian government announced the closure of all universities on March 12, 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The shutdown was part of a wider range of measures implemented by the government to control the spread of the virus.

The closure of universities affected millions of students across the country, who were forced to stop attending classes and studying on campus. The shutdown also impacted faculty members and university staff, who had to adjust to new working conditions and remote teaching methods.

### 2.3.1. Impact on Students:

The university shutdown had a significant impact on students in Algeria. Many students faced challenges with adapting to remote learning and lack of access to technology and internet connectivity in some areas. This resulted in many students falling behind in their studies and experiencing academic difficulties.

In addition, the closure of universities also affected students' mental health and wellbeing. Many students were isolated from their peers and support networks, which led to feelings of anxiety and stress.

### 2.3.2. Impact on Faculty:

The university shutdown also had a significant impact on faculty members in Algeria. Professors and instructors had to adjust to new teaching methods, including online learning platforms and video conferencing. This required additional training and resources, which posed challenges for some faculty members.

In addition, the shutdown also affected faculty members' research activities and their ability to connect with colleagues and collaborate on projects. The closure of university labs and research facilities also had an impact on ongoing research projects and scientific progress.

### 2.3.3. Impact on the Education System:

The shutdown of universities in Algeria also had a significant impact on the education system as a whole. The closure of universities disrupted the academic calendar, which led to delays in graduation and increased uncertainty for students and their families.

The shutdown also highlighted the need for investment in technology and infrastructure to support remote learning and ensure equitable access to education for all students.

### 2.3.4. Challenges:

The university shutdown in Algeria also highlighted several challenges facing the education system, including the need for more investment in technology and infrastructure, and the importance of providing support for students and faculty during times of crisis.

In addition, the shutdown also highlighted the need for more flexible and adaptive teaching methods that can accommodate changes and disruptions in the academic calendar.

## 2.4. Historical Context of Blended Learning in Algeria

Blended learning is a teaching approach that combines traditional face-to-face instruction with online learning activities. While this approach has gained popularity in recent years, it has a longer history than many people realize. In Algeria, blended learning has been used in higher education institutions since the 1990s, although the term "blended learning" was not commonly used at that time.

The introduction of blended learning in Algeria was largely driven by the government's efforts to improve access to education in the country. In the 1990s, Algeria faced significant

economic and social challenges, which resulted in limited resources for education. To address this issue, the government turned to technology as a way to provide access to education for more students.

The first attempts at blended learning in Algeria were focused on providing distance education to students in remote areas of the country. In the early days, this involved the use of radio and television broadcasts to deliver instruction to students. However, as technology advanced, the government began to explore new ways of delivering education through technology.

One of the earliest examples of blended learning in Algeria was the use of teleconferencing technology to connect students in remote areas with teachers in urban areas. This approach was used primarily in the fields of science and engineering, where students needed access to specialized equipment and expertise. By connecting students with teachers through teleconferencing, the government was able to provide access to high-quality education to more students, regardless of their location.

In the early 2000s, the government launched a major initiative to modernize higher education in Algeria. As part of this initiative, several universities began to experiment with blended learning approaches, using a combination of face-to-face instruction and online learning activities. The goal was to provide students with more flexible learning opportunities, while also improving the quality of instruction.

Today, blended learning is a common approach in many higher education institutions in Algeria. It is used to support a range of disciplines, from science and engineering to humanities and social sciences. While there are still challenges to overcome, such as the need for more reliable technology infrastructure and greater access to digital resources, the use of blended learning is seen as a critical tool for expanding access to education and improving student outcomes in Algeria.

## 2.5. Adoption and Implementation of Blended Learning in Algerian Universities

The adoption of blended learning in Algerian universities was a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused the closure of universities and other educational institutions. The Algerian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research issued a directive to all universities in March 2020 to transition to online learning. This prompted universities to adopt blended learning as a way of delivering education to students while minimizing the risk of transmission.

The adoption of blended learning in Algerian universities offers several benefits. One of the main benefits is the flexibility that blended learning provides. Students can learn at their own pace and on their own schedule, which can be particularly useful for those who have other commitments like work or family.

The implementation of blended learning in Algerian universities involved several stages. The first stage was creating awareness among students and faculty about the need for online learning and providing training to instructors on how to use the various online learning platforms like Moodle, Zoom, and Google Meet. This involved workshops and training

sessions to ensure that instructors and students were comfortable with the technology and able to use it effectively.

The second stage was the development of course materials for online delivery. This involved adapting traditional course materials for online delivery and creating new materials that were better suited for online learning, such as videos, quizzes, and interactive assignments.

The third stage involved selecting the online learning platforms that would be used in Algerian universities. This involved evaluating various platforms based on factors such as ease of use, cost, and features, and selecting the ones that were most suitable for the specific needs of each university.

The fourth stage involved the actual implementation of blended learning in Algerian universities. This involved creating online course content, setting up virtual classrooms, and conducting live sessions using videoconferencing tools like Zoom and Google Meet.

There are several platforms that are commonly used for blended learning in Algerian universities. These include:

**Moodle** – an open-source learning management system that is widely used in universities around the world. Moodle allows instructors to create online courses and provides tools for communication, collaboration, and assessment.

**Zoom** – a videoconferencing tool that allows instructors to conduct live sessions with students. Zoom provides features such as screen sharing, chat, and virtual backgrounds.

**Google Meet** – a videoconferencing tool that is part of the Google Workspace suite of tools. Google Meet allows instructors to conduct live sessions with students and provides features such as screen sharing, chat, and recording.

**Facebook** – a social media platform that can be used for discussions and collaboration between students and instructors.

## 2.6.Impacts of Blended Learning on Teaching and Learning in Algerian Universities

The implementation of blended learning has had a positive impact on teaching in Algerian universities. Blended learning has allowed instructors to use a variety of teaching methods, such as online lectures, discussions, and group activities, to engage students in the learning process. This has resulted in increased participation and engagement among students.

Blended learning has also enabled instructors to provide personalized feedback to students and monitor their progress more closely. This has helped instructors to identify areas where students may be struggling and adjust their teaching methods accordingly. Blended learning has also increased the efficiency of teaching in Algerian universities. Instructors can use online resources to supplement their teaching, providing students with access to additional resources that can help them understand difficult concepts. This also allows instructors to focus on more complex topics during class time, using online resources to supplement students' understanding.

Blended learning has had a significant impact on learning in Algerian universities. Blended learning provides students with more flexibility in how they learn, allowing them to

learn at their own pace and on their own schedule. This has been particularly useful for students who have other commitments, such as work or family.

The integration of technology in blended learning has also made learning more interactive and engaging. Students can access online resources and participate in online discussions, providing them with a more interactive learning experience. Additionally, online assessments and quizzes can be used to assess students' understanding of course material and provide immediate feedback, helping students identify areas that require further study.

Moreover, blended learning has enabled Algerian universities to reach more students. Online resources can be made available to students in remote or rural areas, providing access to education that may not have been available otherwise.

## 2.7.Challenges Faced in Implementing Blended Learning in Algerian Universities

In Algerian universities, the implementation of blended learning has been a critical step in ensuring that students continue their education despite the pandemic. However, blended learning has presented several challenges in Algerian universities. These challenged include:

**Lack of Access to Technology and Reliable Internet Connectivity:**

One of the significant challenges faced in implementing blended learning in Algerian universities is the lack of access to technology and reliable internet connectivity. Many students do not have access to the necessary technology or reliable internet connectivity, making it difficult for them to participate in online learning activities. According to a study by Bouchakour and Rahal (2020), the lack of access to technology and internet connectivity

was one of the most significant challenges in implementing blended learning in Algerian universities. This challenge is more pronounced in remote and rural areas of the country, where access to technology and the internet is limited.

**Inadequate Infrastructure:**

Another challenge faced in implementing blended learning in Algerian universities is inadequate infrastructure. Algerian universities have had to make significant investments in technology and infrastructure to facilitate blended learning. However, many universities still lack the necessary infrastructure to support blended learning effectively. This includes the lack of dedicated IT support staff and insufficient funding for the development of online learning platforms.

**Resistance to Change:**

The implementation of blended learning has also faced resistance from some faculty members and students. Some instructors are resistant to change and prefer traditional face-to-face instruction, while some students may find online learning challenging or impersonal. This resistance can be overcome through adequate training and support for faculty members and students to help them adapt to blended learning.

**Inadequate Training and Support for Instructors:**

The implementation of blended learning requires adequate training and support for instructors to use online learning platforms effectively. However, many instructors in Algerian universities lack the necessary training and support to use online learning platforms. This can lead to ineffective use of online learning platforms and a lack of engagement among students. To address this challenge, universities need to invest in training and support

programs for instructors to ensure they have the necessary skills and knowledge to use online learning platforms effectively.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has shed light on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education in Algeria, specifically on teaching and learning in Algerian universities. It has discussed the shutdown of universities in Algeria as a response to the pandemic and its impact on students, faculty, and the education system. Additionally, this chapter has provided a historical context of blended learning in Algeria, the adoption and implementation of blended learning in Algerian universities, and the impacts and challenges faced in implementing blended learning during the pandemic.

The chapter has highlighted the importance of adopting alternative teaching methods to ensure that students continue to receive quality education during the pandemic. Blended learning has emerged as a viable solution, but it also presents its own set of challenges. Therefore, it is important to continuously assess and improve the implementation of blended learning to ensure its effectiveness.

# Chapter Three:

# Research Methodology

## 3.1 Introduction

The Research Methodology chapter encompasses the practical initiatives from the part of the researcher. This chapter sheds light on the methodology adopted for the research study which is a quantitative one on the basis of a structured questionnaire. In addition, other elements pertaining to research methodology such as thedata analysis, the sample and population are also highlighted.

## 3.2 Adopted Research Methodology

In this research study, a qualitative approach is used for the data collection process to highlight the findings. Since the subject of assessing the effectiveness of blended learning during the COVID-19 pandemic is quite an interesting topic to say the least, each individual has his own perception and evaluation of the latter topic, which prompts the use of numerical data to accurately measure the participants' responses.

### 3.2.1 Quantitative Approach

Prior to elaborating on the practical side of the study, it is first pivotal to define the quantitative method for the audience. The present method is a data-gathering procedure characterized by the use of statistical data as a tool for saving time and resources. According to Bryman (2001), the quantitative research approach is the research that places emphasis on numbers and figures in the collection and analysis of data. Imperatively, quantitative research approach can be seen as being scientific in nature. The use of statistical data for the research descriptions and analysis reduces the time and effort which the researcher would have invested in describing the results.

### 3.2.2 Justifying the Use of Quantitative Approach

The selection of the quantitative approach is due to its prominence in the Academic field. In addition to this, many elements in this research, such as data, study findings and critical analysis can easily be subjected to statistical comparison and/or calculation. And since the process of questionnaire-based data collection in itself is a process that is highly quantitative procedure, it would only serve to increase the credibility, authenticity, and reliability of the research and its findings.

It is of great importance to digest that both quantitative and qualitative analyses contribute to a high level of credibility and can help in improving the way modern-day research is conducted. The current study demands that the most appropriate approach to the research topic be chosen and implemented. This is due to the fact that both research approaches have distinct characteristics, and while each research methodology differs from the other in a variety of ways, they are both designed to facilitate the research process.

## 3.3 Research Design

The main goal of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of blended learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, while putting significant emphasis on the department of English at the "University of AmmarThelidji"as a feasible case study. The population consisted of 30 EFL Students from the department of English at the "University of AmmarThelidji" who were requested to answer a series of questions related to the topic of the dissertation in the form of a questionnaire, some of whom were still studying during the pandemic era. The objective of this questionnaire is to gather insights and perspectives from participants regarding the most appropriate method of learning during times of necessity, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic era where Education was the field most influenced by the sudden change in form and utility.

## 3.4 Questionnaire Defined

Questionnaires are frequently used in quantitative research and social research. It is a series of questions asked to individuals to obtain statistically useful information about a given topic. When properly constructed and responsibly administered, questionnaires become a vital instrument by which statements can be made about specific groups or people or entire populations. They are a valuable method of collecting a wide range of information from a large number of individuals, often referred to as respondents. Having that said, it is worth noting that adequate questionnaire construction is critical to the success of a survey; appropriate questions, correct ordering of questions, correct scaling, or good questionnaire format can make the survey worthwhile, as it may accurately reflect the views and opinions of the participants.

A questionnaire can be either structured or unstructured. Structured questions are those questions in which there are definite, concrete and predetermined questions. The questions are presented with exactly the same wordings and in the same order to all respondents. A highly structured questionnaire is one in which all questions and answers are specified and comments in respondents own words are minimized. When these characteristics are not present in a questionnaire, it is termed as unstructured or non-structured questionnaire. Interviewer is provided with a general guide on the type of information to be obtained, but the exact question formulation is largely his own responsibility and replies are to be taken down in respondent's own words. Example: How can we improve the quality of blended learning in Algerian Universities?

## 3.5Study sample

The setting of where the questionnairewas handed and answered is the department of English at the “University of AmmarThelidji” located in the province of Laghouat. The study's participants consisted of 30 EFL studentsranging from L1 to M2 respectively. The participants were selected using non-probability sampling, where they were randomly selected to take part in the data collection process. The participants' ages ranged from 18 to 35 years.

## 3.6 Describing Data Collection

In this study, data collection was carried out through the use of a structured questionnaire, designed to gather comprehensive and relevant information from the target participants. The questionnaire served as a primary data collection instrument, tailored to address the research objectives and hypotheses effectively. Moreover, the questionnaire consists of a combination of thirteen open and close-ended questions (4 Yes/No questions and 9 Open-ended questions) which result to the collection of quantitative and qualitative data that reflect specific information from participants. By analyzing the participants' opinions and answers, the analysis will provide valuable insights into the perceived effectieveness of blended learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, its benefits, challenges in implementation, and suggestions for improvement. The findings will help inform decision-making processes and potential strategies to enhance the integration and effectiveness of blended learningin Algerian universities. Additionally, Participants' responses will be treated with the utmost confidentiality, and personal identifying information will be kept anonymous.

### 3.6.1 Data Analysis

**a) What is your gender?**

The graph demonstrates the participants are 30 in total; 20 of whom are females and the remaining 10 are males. This in part shows that female university students are more interested in answering questionnaires and are well informed on the challenges of remote learning in Algeria.

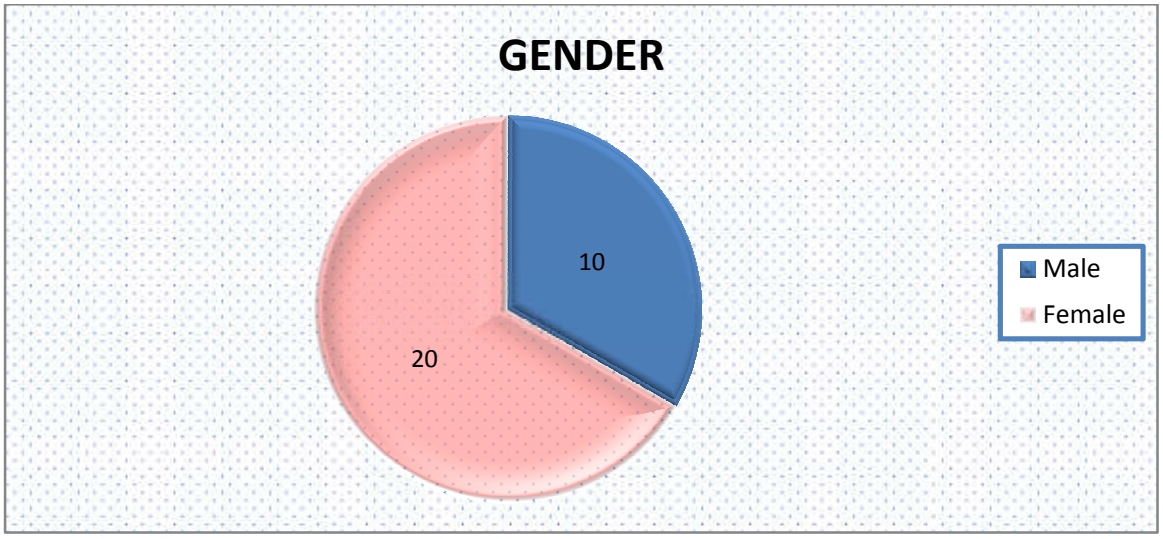


Figure 1: The statistical Measurement of Participants by Gender

**b) What is your Age?**

It can be duduced from the below-depicted graph that 50% of participants (15) are aged between 18 to 24, respectively. This further shows that the majority of participants have an experience with distance learning and provide accurate information on its usage and effectiveness during the COVID-19 pandemic era.

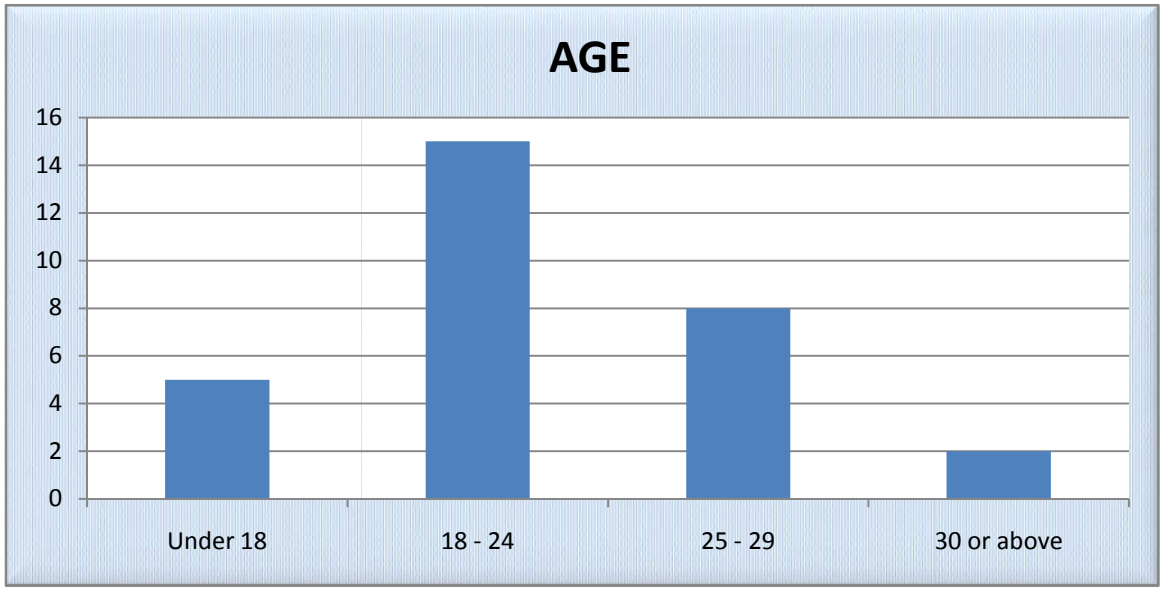


Figure 2: Measuring the average Age of Participants

**c) Speaking from a student's perspective, how would you evaluate the teaching methodology in Algerian universities?**

This question was asked for the purpose of observing how students perceive the quality of teaching that university teachers offer to learners. To this point, the graph shows that over 50% of students agree that the methdology they are taught by is average at best, whereas 30% claim that it is lacking in terms of effectiveness which can be seen in students' continuous struggles to maintain a good level of language proficiency.

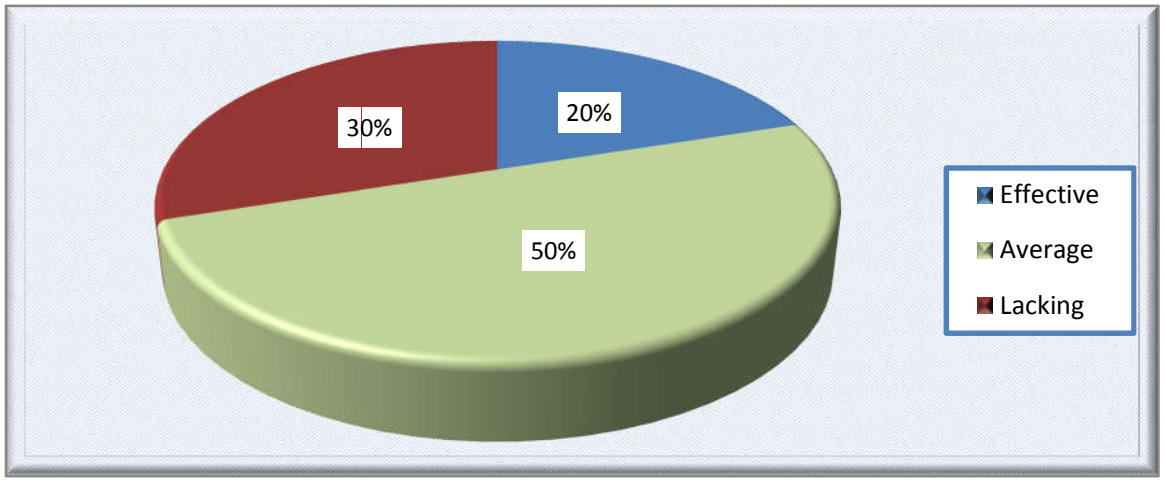


Figure 3:Students' evaluation of the teaching methodology in Algerian Universities

**d) Throughout your academic journey, have you been taught in settings different from the standard face-to-face format?**

According to the majority of participants, the face-to-face approach to teaching is not the only one present in universities as sometimes teachers disseminate knowledge on online platforms in the form of a 30 min or 1 hour conferencing session between students and teachers. They further add that E-learning was prominent during the COVID-19 pandemic era but was misued for numerous reasons.

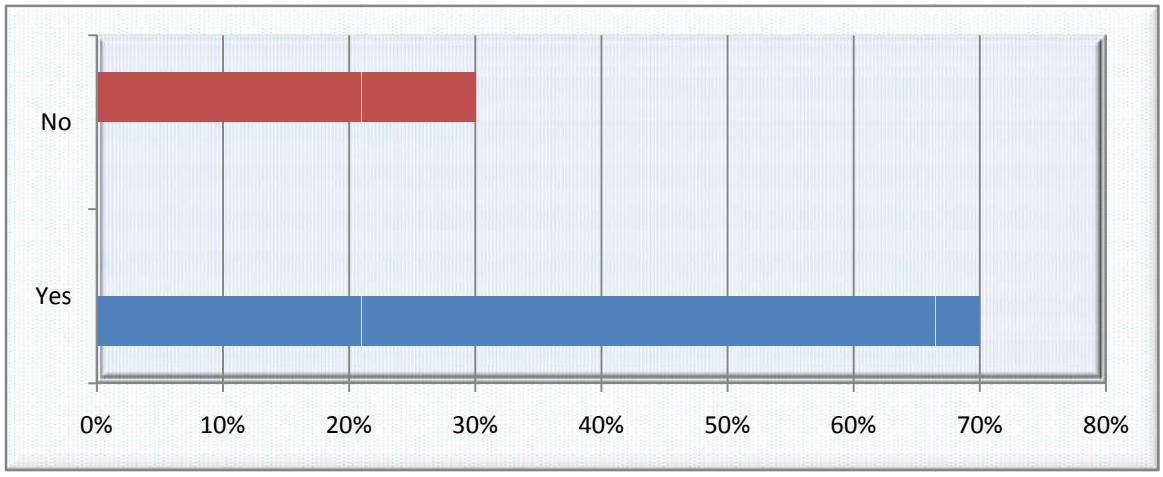


Figure 4: The teaching settings present in the University

**e) Are you familiar with the concept of Blended learning?**

When asked about blended learning, students expressed familiarity with the term and provided some interesting answers as to how it can be beneficial at times. They mentioned that not every teacher has the ability to utilize various teaching methods to accommodate a wide range of learning preferences.. Thus, instead of heavily relying on the face-to-face setting, teachers should consider providing blended learning to students by also familiarizing them with online and distance learning.

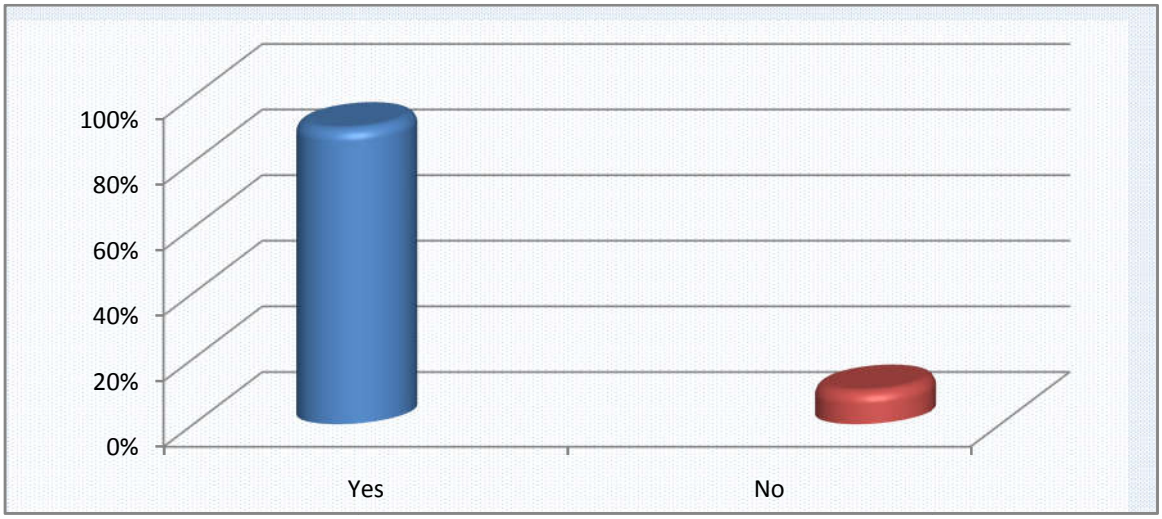


Figure 5: Participants' familiarity with blended learning

**f) Taking the COVID-19 pandemic as a concrete example, how helpful was blended learning to teachers and students at that time?**

Interestingly, the students who experienced blended learning during the COVID-19 pandemic era praised its effectiveness as a tool for learning and stated that with the combination of face-to-face and distance learning, they felt comfortable taking part in the different learning activities and managed to maintain interest in the lesson even from a remote setting due to the flexibility that comes with blended learning implementation. Additionally, students also claimed that during the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers were forced to transition to E-learning and that saved them the struggle of having to commute to the university on a daily basis.

**g) As a university student, what is your preferred method of learning?**

The graph demonstrates that over 40% of participants prefer to learn in a hybrid setting, i.e, with blended learning. This in part shows that the notion of blended learning is gaining prominence in the field of education, particularly in the Algerian educational system. Hence, universities in Algeria should be well aware of the importance of keeping students interested by providing different approaches to seeking knowledge with the establishment of blended learning as part of their academic curriculum.

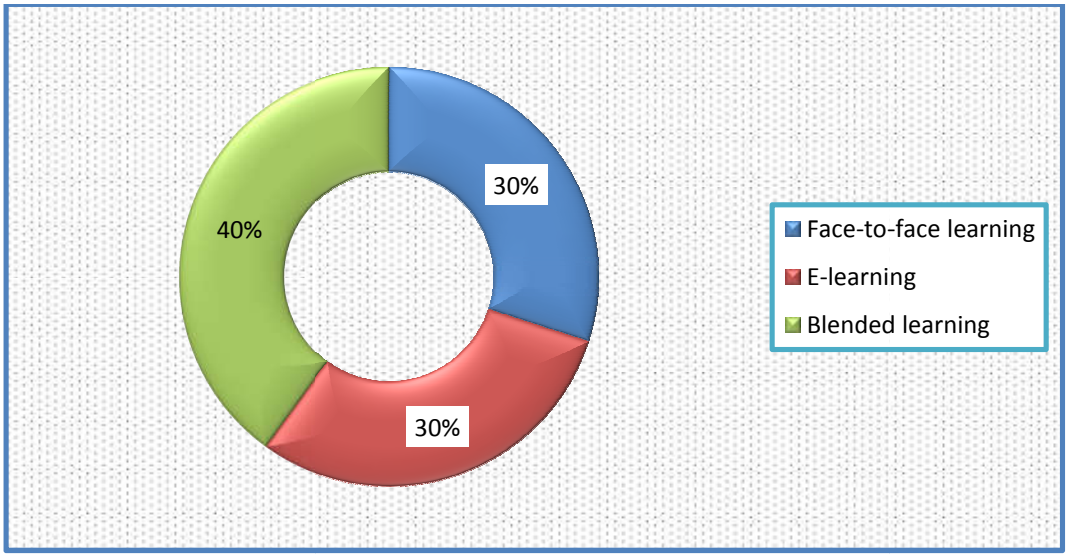


Figure 6: Students' preferred method of learning

**h) According to you, can online sources of learning replace the physical presence of a teacher?**

The majority of respondents, constituting 70% of the total, believe that online sources of learning have the potential to replace the physical presence of a teacher to some extent.About 30% of the respondents hold the view that online sources of learning cannot fully replace the physical presence of a teacher. This group likely believes that there are certain aspects of teaching that are better facilitated through direct interactions with an instructor.

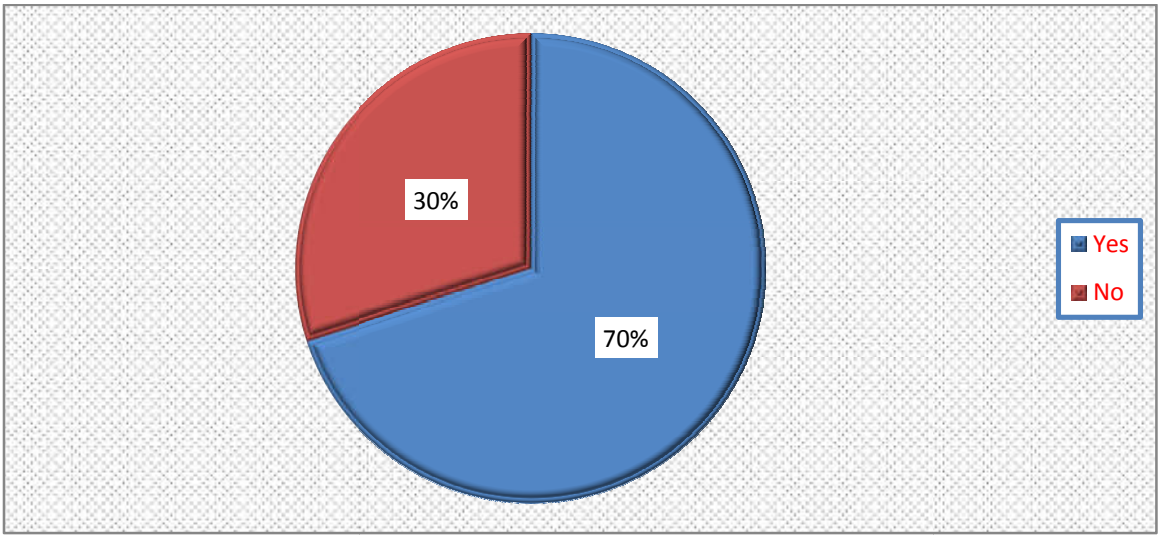


Figure 7: To which extent is the teacher important in the learning process?

**i) What difficulties can teachers face in blended learning circumstances?**

The majority of students claim that the university teachers confront challenges like grappling with online tools and potential disruptions due to technical issues. Crafting engaging online content aligned with the curriculum demands time and specialized skills. Access to dependable technical support is essential to tackle interruptions during online sessions, while training and professional development are necessary for teachers to adeptly leverage online tools and succeed in implementing effective blended learning strategies.

**j) In your opinion, what role can a teacher play in a blended learning setting?**

By addressing the challenges and obstacles that teachers might face in implementing blended learning programs, this question aims to identify the potential role of the teacher in the eyes of the students. Having that said, students perceive the teacher as more then a source of learning; he can play the role of a facilitator, an adviser, a mentor, and above all a teacher who can enlighten the student's life with knowledge and expertise. Additionally, they explain that the role of a teacher should be passive in blended learning which is not to teach the lesson to students, but to help them understand by themselves with visual and audible clues; this way the learner can become more self-autonomous and promote themselves as the primary source of learning.

**k) Do you believe that blended learning should play a more significant role in Algerian Universities?**

Students expressed desire to see blended learning being considered by the ministry of higher education and scientific research in circumstances when it is most needed, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic. Blended learning can help generate positive feedback from learners and increase the chances of their learning needs and styles being met and satisfied.

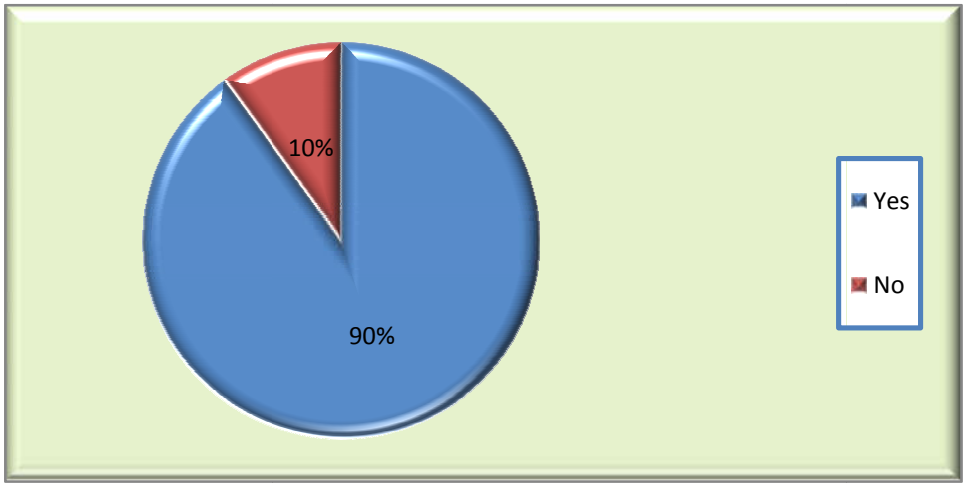


Figure 8: Observing the importance of blended learning for Algerian Universities

**l) Some students failed to get the average during the COVID-19 pandemic era. According to you, which of these factors might have influenced their performance?**

Respondents identify various factors contributing to subpar student performance, reflecting a belief in the influence of multiple elements. Notably, a significant 40% associate students' struggles with unfamiliarity in distance learning. About 35% connect the performance gap to insufficient teaching methods, and 25% point to teachers' misuse of blended learning. These insights highlight student challenges in adapting to remote education, the necessity of effective teaching techniques, and the significance of appropriately applying blended learning for successful outcomes amid the pandemic.

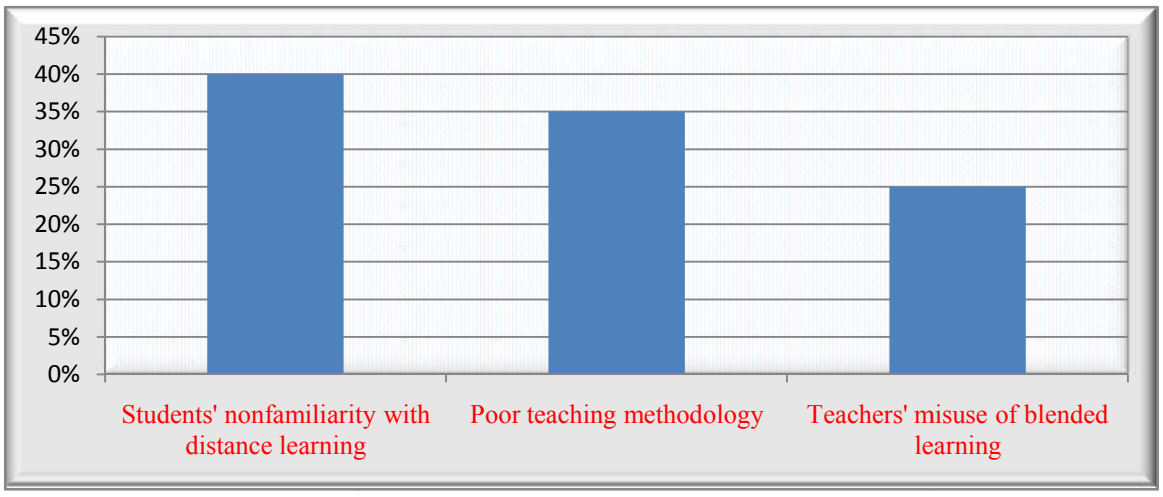


Figure 9: Observing the factors behind students' difficulties with blended learning

m) **What strategies can you recommend for the government to take for better blended learning outcomes?**

To increase the effectiveness of learning in difficult circumstances such as during the COVID-19 pandemic, the government must provide universities and educational institutions with the technological means necessary for the establishment of blended learning; this includes Monitors, projectors, solid network reception and fast internet speed, laptops for students who cannot afford one and abundant access to virtual libraries for downloading books. But above all, the government should strive to raise awareness in regard to learning in general and make of it as a tool to never be neglected or compensated for under all sorts of circumstances.

### 3.6.2 Results

Overall, it can be deduced from particpants' answers that they recognize the important role of blended learning during the COVID-19 pandemic era. To some extent, students believe that blended learning helps foster the students' self-autonomy in regard to learning and empowers them to comfortably approach learning from both a face-to-face and a distant setting. Many participants have experienced education during the pandemic era, with some observing improvements in their mindsets and performances.

The benefits of blended learning, according to participants, include improved flexible learning environment, effective communication between learners and teachers, savings of time and energy and diverse sources of learning. However, participants also acknowledge challenges in implementing blended learning programs, such as limited resources, learner engagement issues, and resistance to change.

The majority of participants believe that blended learning should play a more significant role in the higher education setting, suggesting its integration into the core curriculum of

everyday education and training. They emphasize that university teachers should possess essential skills like effective communication, critical thinking, flexibility, and professionalism to successfully engage in blended learning settings.

Regarding personal contributions, participants express a willingness to actively participate in organizing workshops, sharing their knowledge and experiences, collaborating with others, and suggesting innovative approaches to promote blended learning at in Algeria.

To some extent, the questionnaire responses indicate a positive attitude towards blended learning and its effectivenessduring the COVID-19 pandemic era in Algeria. Participants acknowledge the benefits of blended learning, identify challenges in implementation, and offer insights on how to enhance its role through improved skills and active involvement. These findings can inform future strategies and initiatives to strengthen blended learninging Algerian universities and promote better outcomes amongst the community.

Interestingly, the effectiveness of blended learning in the case of the university of Ammar Thelidji has been quite noticeableduring the pandemic era; the graph below presents accurate statistics that reflect the amount of students who got the average duringthe last three academic years2020/2021, 2021/2022 and 2022/2023.

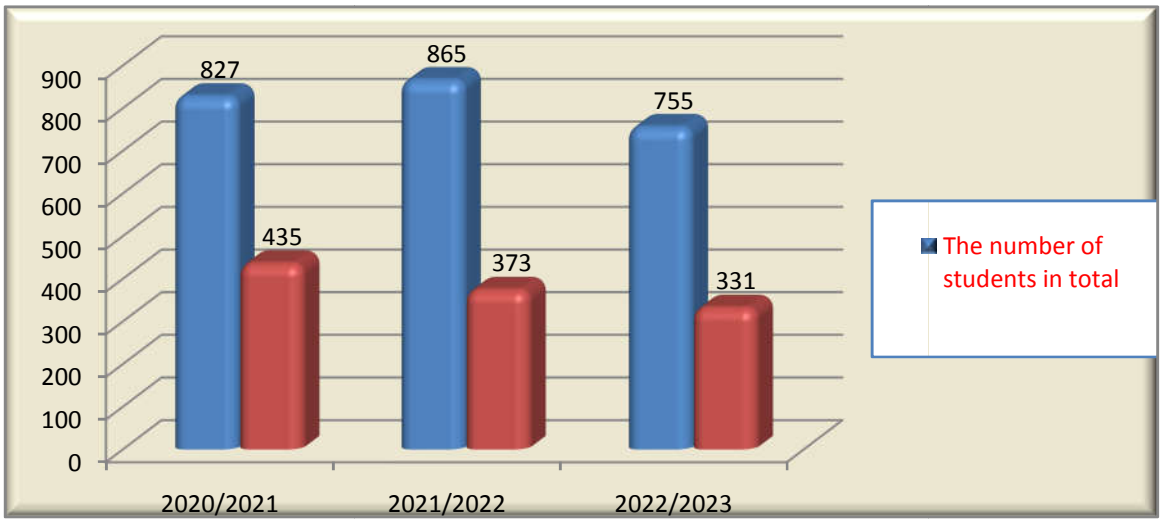


Figure 10: Observing the effectiveness of blended learning during the pandemic era

## 3.7 Limitations of Research

The present research study suffered from a set of limitations. First, the researcher encountered a problem of time; finding participants who are willing to answer the questionnaire was time and energy-consuming. The sample can be considered small due to the fact that the 30 participants belong to the same department, which is the department at the University of AmmarThelidji - Laghouat, thus limiting the generalizability of the findings.

## 3.8 Suggestions and Recommendations

As with any research study, there is always room for improvement; the researcher provides the following set of suggestions and recommendations that can help promote blended learning as a concrete alternative to face-to-face learning in Algeria, and mitigate the struggles that arise from its misuse:

1. Algerian University teachers ought to be subjected to a teaching training program in order to acquire the basics of effective classroom management and foster their teaching methodology.

2. The government should provide universities and educational institutions with the technological means needed for the establishment of blended learning and promote it on a national scale.

3. The teaching methodology of most teachers at thedepartment of English at the university of Laghouatought to be considerably elevated given the constant critics it has been subjected to from EFL students.

4. Teachers and learners are a valuable asset to the university and are not to be taken for granted. Thus, a mutual understanding and cooperation is a must for both sides to establish a friendly, stress-free working environment.

5. The current stance of the blended learning in Algeria should be considerably elevated in order to promote the country's education rate to greater heights and entice foreign teachers and learners to collaborate with Algeria.

6. For future researchers interested in carrying research in regard to the effectiveness of blended learning in Algeria, it is advisable to opt for a larger sample population so as to acquire a wider view on the study findings.

## 3.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher provided a thorough representation of the data collection process involving the use of a structured questionnaire (with a combination of close-ended, open-ended and multiple choice questions) that EFL students fromthe department of English at the University of Ammar Thelidji - Laghouat graciously answered. The data collected was analyzed using graphs and observations, as well as a comprehensive discussion of the findings. Additionally, a set of suggestions and recommendations were provided to raise awareness in regard to blended learning usage in Algerian universities.

# GENERAL CONCLUSION

This research sought to assess the efficacy of the blended learning approach, which combines online and traditional methods, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Through a rigorous quantitative analysis of survey responses, it becomes evident that blended learning significantly influenced students' academic performance and learning outcomes during the pandemic. The findings underscore the potential of integrating blended learning into the Algerian higher education system as a catalyst for educational advancement and enhanced quality.

Returning to the central inquiry of this thesis, the data analysis demonstrates that blended learning had a notably positive impact on students' linguistic and academic performance, contributing to an overall improvement in their results. Impressively, the majority of students expressed favorable views of this approach, citing its manifold benefits, and expressed a strong desire for the government to commit to its long-term integration as a viable alternative to traditional face-to-face learning.

However, it is imperative to acknowledge the challenges faced by students in the Department of English, particularly regarding limited access to virtual libraries for reading materials. This challenge was particularly pronounced during the pandemic, particularly for those who were in the midst of their academic thesis work. It is thus strongly recommended that the Algerian government takes proactive measures to ensure students and educators across the nation have ample access to online resources, thereby enriching the quality of blended learning within the country.

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# & APPENDICES

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**Appendix (A) : Questionnaire**

1- What is your gender?

Male ☐ Female ☐

2- What is your age?

Under 18 ☐ 18-24 ☐ 25-29 ☐ 30 or above ☐

3- Speaking from a student's perspective, how would you evaluate the teaching methodology in Algerian Universities?

Effective ☐ Average ☐cking ☐

4- Throughout your academic journey, have you been taught in settings different from the standard face-to-face format?

Yes ☐ No ☐

5- Are you familiar with the concept of Blended learning?

Yes No ☐ ☐

6- Taking the COVID-19 pandemic as a concrete example, how helpful was blended learning to teachers and students at that time?

…….....

7- As a university student, what is your preferred method of learning?

Face-to-face learning ☐ E-learning ☐ Blended learning ☐

8- According to you, can online sources of learning replace the physical presence of a teacher?

Yes ☐ ☐

9- What difficulties can teachers face in blended learning circumstances?

……..……...

10- In your opinion, what role can a teacher play in a blended learning setting?

…….

11- Do you believe that blended learning should play a more significant role in Algerian universities?

…….

12- Many students failed to get the average during the COVID-19 pandemic era. According to you, which of these factors might have influenced their performance?

Teachers' misuse of blended learning ☐

Poor teaching methodology ☐

Students' non-familiarity with distance learning ☐

13- What strategies can you recommend for the government to take for better blended learning outcomes?

……